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The Ancient Cause of An Eternal Squabble

By VICTORIA ESTRADA

NOTE.—This remarkable fable was prepared for publication in the June issue of the JOURNAL, from which the exigencies of space compelled its omission until the present issue. It is from the ethnographic collection of Dr. H. Otley Beyer, head of the department of anthropology and ethnology, University of the Philippines, College of Liberal Arts. By Dr. Beyer's patient work in anthropology and allied sciences the Philippines past is being accurately reconstructed, a boon which is destined to prove invaluable to the islands and to the world. For much other material occasionally published, as well as informed courses, the JOURNAL is indebted to Dr. Beyer. Grateful acknowledgment is hereby made.—ED.

Long, long ago, when the lower animals were not yet deprived of their faculty of speech, an antipathy existed between the men and the dogs. The dogs organized a society for the purpose of protecting themselves against the aggressive attitude and harsh treatment men visited upon them. They held their meeting in a forest, where they elected officers and discussed all matters that pertained to their general welfare. Several dogs complained of the ill treatment they had received from their masters. The dogs wishing to put an end to such cruelties, the grievances were duly weighed and the chairman appointed a committee to investigate matters.

The committee decided that a resolution should be sent to the king of men for redress of the dogs' grievances, and the meeting passed the resolution unanimously.

After the petition had been signed by all the dogs, decision had to be made as to who should take the document to the king. An old dog who commanded universal respect was selected for this ambassadorial duty. Choice fell upon him for two reasons. Having no teeth, he could easily be distinguished from other dogs, and the petition, carried in his mouth, would not be torn.

Early next morning the ambassador dog left the forest meeting to go to the city of men, the capital where the king resided. He had

gone a long way when he chanced to pass a house where the singing and laughing told him a jovial festival was in progress. He suspected a wedding, and of course a feast. So he decided to rest a while at the house and to steal a chance to appease his hunger.

With the scroll still in his mouth he climbed up the stairs, but he encountered a cat on the landing.

He requested this cat to keep the scroll for him while he sought something to eat. Now the cat was mistress of the house, she was very busy attending to all her guests. She took the petition, however, but having no time to tuck it away in her bedroom chest she hid it away in the attic until she should be more at leisure. Then the incident slipped her memory.

In the afternoon, just before sunset, the dog came to the cat and asked for the scroll he had given her to keep for him. Then the cat remembered. She climbed hurriedly up to the attic, but found only some bits of paper scattered about. She turned them about in her paws and found that they were the precious petition. While she was standing perplexed before the little heap of torn paper, she saw a mouse dart stealthily across the attic floor. She at once concluded that it was the mouse who had done the mischief. She tried to pounce

upon the truant, but he got through a hole in the boards and was safe.

There was nothing for the cat to do but to return empty-handed to where the dog awaited her. She slowly descended from the attic, the dog asked her where the petition was, and she made a clean breast of everything. Whereupon the dog, who after all was but a casual guest in the house, and quite uninvited, grew angry; and he and the cat began to quarrel. The dog insisted the cat should return the petition to him; again and again the cat explained what had happened and that the sneaking mouse, not she, was to blame for everything.

Meanwhile the dogs were all waiting in the forest. Days, weeks and years passed, but their ambassador did not return. He was afraid to return, without having presented his petition nor obtained an answer from the king of mankind, so at last he had committed suicide—despairing of a solution to his predicament. But the dogs believed, indeed they still believe to this day, that their ambassador was a traitor. So that when two dogs meet they show their teeth, they are still looking for the dog whom they sent with the petition to the king of men; and the innocent, of course, wish to prove their loyalty to the tribe. The dog and cat are forever quarreling, about the petition, and the cat hates the mouse, the real cause of all this trouble and the never-ending feud.

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